

## MEXICAN WOLF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Final Summary Notes for October 14-15, 2004

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**Note: this is ~~not~~ a public document.**

Location: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Office, 309 South Mountain Avenue, Springerville, Arizona 85938  
Time: AZ Time: 0800 – 1700 on October 14 and 0800 – 1200 on October 15  
Host: Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Participants: AMOC Lead Agencies: AGFD – Terry B. Johnson (Chair), Deb O’Neill, Bill Van Pelt, Jon Cooler, and Dan Groebner; NMDGF – Chuck Hayes, Lisa Kirkpatrick, and Nick Smith; USDA APHIS WS – Dave Bergman, Chris Carillo, Keel Price, J. Brad Miller, and Richard Grabbe; USDA FS – Wally Murphy; USFWS – Colleen Buchanan, John Morgart, Victoria Fox, Susan MacMullin, Jim Ashburner, and John Oakleaf; and WMAT – Cynthia Dale.

AMWG Signatory Cooperators: Greenlee County AZ – Hector Ruedas and Kay Gale; Navajo County AZ – not present; Sierra County – not present; and NM Department of Agriculture – Bud Starnes.

AMWG Non-signatory Participants: Catron County NM – Alex Thal (CACO); Cochise County AZ – not present; Graham County AZ – not present; and SCAT – Steve Titla.

Note: some of the participants were not present for the entire meeting.

### October 14

#### A. Welcome, Introductions, Ground Rules, and Agenda Review (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

Terry Johnson called the meeting to order at 0814 local time. After a brief welcome and introductions, and explanations for absentees, the previous Ground Rules were reaffirmed.

The agenda was reviewed and two items were added. An item regarding liability was added to the MOU discussion, and an update on the IFT office was added to the agenda. Copies of the information flow matrix and July AMOC summary notes were distributed.

#### B. Review of Action Items (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

AMOC reviewed the hand out of action items. Incorrect meeting dates were changed on the handout. It was reaffirmed that we will only hold four public AMWG meetings on the five-year review.

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C. Status of the Interagency MOU (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

Sierra County has signed the MOU.

**Action Item:** Terry will give Victoria Fox additional information later on signatories.

Catron County declined to sign. Terry read a letter from the county stating their reasons.

Terry, with help from some AMOC/AMWG members, submitted an award nomination to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AGFC). Catron, Graham, Greenlee, Navajo, and Sierra counties and the White Mountain and San Carlos Apache Tribes were nominated for going above and beyond their normal duties to be active participants in AMOC/AMWG, and ensure complete representation of the public's interests. Award recipients, significant others, and their families will not have to pay to attend the award ceremony. No State or Federal agencies were nominated, as the work they do in AMOC/AMWG is within the scope of their normal duties.

A copy of the nomination was distributed. Terry asked that this information not be passed to others, so the nominees could first be contacted by AGFD.

Grant County NM has again expressed interest in participating, but is not getting information from AMOC.

**Action Item:** Chuck Hayes will provide Terry with contact information (email address) for Grant County, so they can be included in the AMOC email distribution list.

D. Directors Summits (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

The September 1 Summit was very successful, and another one will be held at Wildlife Services in Phoenix on December 17 from 0800 to 1330.

The Lead Agencies TIR and SCAT attended the September meeting. Overall, the Directors were satisfied, but they want another "reality check" in December to cover items of concern (e.g. Standard Operating Procedures for the Project). The Directors' intentions are to have the meeting every year, but two meetings this year seem appropriate.

It is important that we keep referring back to the MOU. This will hold us to the path to which we have all agreed.

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E. Compensation Subcommittee Report (Discussion Leader: Dave Bergman)

Dave Bergman handed out summary notes from the Subcommittee's meetings, ideas that were brainstormed, and models of ways compensation may work.

John Oakleaf has been compiling information from other states and will provide a summary later. Bud Starnes and Alex Thal have been working with the public, staffers, and congressional representatives.

Federal cooperators cannot lobby for funding, but other members can and should. AGFD is willing to be part of the effort to move ball forward, including helping members go to Washington, D.C. A partnership works great to get congressional attention, but the most powerful voice will be the counties and private individuals. It will not be until February or March before this moves that far forward. SCAT is represented on the compensation Subcommittee, but we need to have a representative from WMAT. Tribes are not restricted from lobbying, and SCAT would love to help.

**Action Item:** Add this discussion as an agenda item for the directors' summit in December.

**Action Item:** Cynthia Dale will follow up with John Oakleaf to see who from WMAT should participate on the subcommittee.

**Question:** Is this lobbying for compensation or for the program in general? **Answer:** For compensation.

**Action Item:** Dave Bergman will provide Deb O'Neill with a Subcommittee update to include in these notes.

**REMINDER:** These AMOC sessions are not public meetings, so the documents handed out are not public documents. We need to be careful to keep these documents within the agencies. This does not apply to the Directors' Summit notes.

**Action Item:** Henceforth, AMOC materials not for public distribution must specify that in a header on the top of the page.

F. Liability issue (Discussion Leader: Bud Starnes)

A certified herd is normally insured and is prized livestock (bull \$250k). There is a huge worry in New Mexico that wolves may get into one of these herds. Insurance companies were asked what they will do if a wolf takes an animal from a certified herd. Insurance companies would settle what is reasonable, but then they would sue everyone involved to

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recover costs. Agencies could be liable. A paragraph should be added to the MOU to protect the signatories. Federal and state agencies may be protected, but other signatories are not. NMDA's attorneys advised to explore adding language to MOU. The MOU itself would not provide protection, but it would spell out how signatories are involved. What the participation is needs to be clear.

This is different from a lion attack – that's considered reasonable by the insurance companies. Wolves are considered to be above and beyond normal depredation.

Certified cattle have been killed in WY and there was no litigation over it.

The bottom line is that the counties should not be held responsible, so a paragraph should be added to the MOU to protect them.

**Action Item:** Terry will craft a paragraph to be added to the MOU and send it out by November 1 for review. Comments must be submitted to Terry by November 8. The entire process will be completed in 30 days.

### G. Depredation Study Update (Discussion Leader: Dave Bergman)

Stewart Breck joined AMOC by phone to provide an update. First, he was reassured that AMOC is not "fed up" with the study. Pilot years are understandably difficult, but AMOC is willing to continue if Stewart recommends continuation and the host ranch is agreeable.

Stewart emphasized the study was testing aggregate grazing, but cannot continue that aspect due to small sample sizes. There are two options: continue the study or do not continue. Stewart recommends dropping the first objective, which was looking at communal grazing. The sample size was not large enough. He also says it is difficult to monitor the animals in the winter, and he has limited resources. He recommends 6-month monitoring instead of year-round monitoring. Data collected to determine detection rate are fine. This is where the producers find kills in the absence of wolf predation. If wolves move into the area, then the detection rate can be determined. We do not know if the detection rate is different for lions, bears, and wolves. This was a main reason for the study.

Stewart would like to hire a graduate student and collect additional data to support an MS degree. Behavior or spatial analysis could be added. Whatever is added will definitely support the initial study, but will be additional data collected.

There have been significant issues with transmitters on calf ears; they rip out easily. Collars would solve the problem, but he is not sure if re-tooling is an option; he will look into this. If it is an option, changing the eartags to collars may be a possibility.

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Overall, Stewart recommends continuing the study. The depredation rate information he has been collecting is great. He is collecting baseline information without wolves present. This could change if a pack becomes established. There are no wolves currently using the allotment. Objectives 2-4 would remain the same; only objective 1 would be dropped. A critical component of this study is getting spatial information from the IFT. The permittee is definitely supportive of the study continuing.

There is a virtual fence project being conducted on the Jornada del Muerto (New Mexico). It seems to have a lot of commonalities with this study.

**Action Item:** Bud will provide Stewart with a contact for the Jornada study so Stewart can talk with them.

Stewart is basing future project decisions on the funding commitments made by AGFD and WS for the next three years. **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION**.

John Johnson (USDA APHIS-WS Colorado) is interested in using this Project to conduct genetic work by collecting saliva from predators that make kills. He has had mixed success so far with testing his techniques. The kill has to be fairly fresh to collect a sample. If the sample is collected within a few hours, the sample is generally good. Stewart tried to collect a sample from kills that were a few days old, and was not successful. However, he was not familiar with collection methods. DNA degradation depends on a lot of factors. They tried to collect a DNA sample from a fresh lion kill, but were not successful. It was their first attempt, and they may have been doing something wrong.

The eartags have mortality switches. However, the difficulty in getting to the kill is the terrain, nature of the study area, and turnover of personnel. Transmitters last between 1 and 2 years, depending on how their signal is set up.

**Question:** If forced to make a choice, due to shortage of funds, would AGFD fund Stewart's work or John Oakleaf's? **Answer:** That depends on several things. Moreover, John cannot conduct his study without the depredation study; he needs the on-the-ground monitoring that Stewart does.

Stewart's study can be conducted at the funding level currently committed. If we get more money, it should be put toward identifying another site in a different area with different habitat rather than increasing effort in this study area. The comparison is important.

The permittee still cannot be named publicly.

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**Action Item:** Stewart will provide Terry with a modified project description that can be handed out at the AMWG meeting tomorrow.

**TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION** and DOW are interested in getting details on methods of the study (e.g. tag types, cost) so they can look into starting a similar study, although they are limited by their budget.

**Action Item:** **TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION**.

Ear tags are not perfect; GPS collars on predators may be better. However, the information you get will be different.

**TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION**.

USFS is still looking into supporting the study financially. NMDGF said they could not justify spending money in AZ. AGFD questioned why that is so, when Arizona money (IFT funds) is spent on actions in NM as well as in AZ.

It will be difficult to extrapolate data from this study to the range-wide recovery area. The more habitats we can repeat this study in, the better. It is hit or miss where wolves are going to cause problems for cattle. To replicate this study, it will take a lot of money.

AGFD opened up a heritage grant window to allow proposals to study depredation on big game; NM is included. Perhaps Stewart and Chuck should get together and apply for NM.

**Action Item:** Stewart and Chuck will develop a proposal for an AGFD heritage grant to be submitted by the November 30, 2004 deadline. Dan Groebner and Bill Van Pelt can help develop the proposal, but cannot be involved in the review.

**Question:** Will landowners be allowed to use the receivers in the off months? **Answer:** No. It is only an option if the study does not continue.

Everyone concurred with continuing the study. Data will be shared amongst AMOC, but will not be released publicly until the study is completed. WMAT will share also as long as it is not proprietary.

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H. Protocol/SOP Discussion (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson overall, and Lead Synthesizer for each SOP)

Over the past month, we have been collecting comments. We all were supposed to bring 25 copies of drafts, but we have had no time to read them yet. What do we do?

It was decided to choose which protocols were the most important to discuss. AMOC prioritized the SOPs that needed to be reviewed tonight and discussed tomorrow. The agenda was rearranged to accommodate the change.

SOPs handed out included: 0, 1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31, and 33. There were 16 total. SOPs numbered 3, 6, 7, 12, and 32 were missing, but will be copied and handed out in the afternoon session. Copies of comments on these latter SOPs also will be distributed.

AMOC decided that the SOPs should pertain to reintroduction, not recovery, although some of the SOPs could be used in future reintroduction areas.

The Tribes are sovereign, so these SOPs do not affect them on Tribal lands. TIR WMAT may take all of the SOPs and make them an appendix to their wolf management plan. SCAT might like assistance using them to develop SCAT SOPs.

After much deliberation, AMOC decided the assigned synthesizers would identify the SOPs that stimulated a lot of discussion. These would be the SOPs that would be reviewed in the morning. The list is as follows:

0 – no discussion

1 – concept is there and is worth discussion.

2 – needs discussion

5 – different perspectives. needs discussion

9 – few comments. not a biggie. no discussion.

11 – wasn't complete. rush job. clean up. no substantive comments. no discussion.

16 – needs discussion

18 – not a whole lot of comments. no discussion.

19 – no conceptual disagreement. no discussion.

21 – not a lot of comments. no discussion.

22 – needs discussion

23 – not a lot of comments. no discussion.

26 – no discussion.

28 – not a lot of comments. no discussion.

31 – needs discussion

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33 – attachments are not included. no discussion.

SOPs numbered 1, 2, 5, 16, 22, and 31 were discussed intensively after lunch and changes were made as approved by AMOC.

**Action Item:** Change “Arizona-New Mexico” in SOP titles to “Blue Range.”

SOPs numbered 3, 6, 7, 12, and 32 were distributed. We will discuss 32 in the morning. AMOC participants are asked to review it this evening.

We have nothing to share with AMWG on the SOPs tomorrow.

The meeting was adjourned at 1656.

October 15

The meeting began at 0803.

H. SOP Discussion (Continued) (Discussion Leader: Same As Yesterday)

SOP #32 was discussed and changes were made based on AMOC recommendations.

**Action Item:** Alex will get the Presidential Guidelines for Environmental Justice to Terry to distribute to AMOC.

**TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION.**

I. Compensation Subcommittee Meeting (Discussion Leader: Dave Bergman)

The counties will take the lead on developing a recommended compensation program. They will work with congressional staff and a risk management agency. If successful, this program could be brought to other states. The Subcommittee would need concurrence from AMOC that they are going in the right direction. AMOC will have the opportunity to review and approve when there is a plan to move forward. The Subcommittee will be meeting with counties and universities in the very near future to discuss what approach needs to be taken.

The program could allow anyone inside a wolf area to sign up and receive compensation. It is based on a wolf area rather than loss to wolves. In this case, it would cover the 10j area, not the recovery area. The number of individuals covered would be at least 100 people. We have not discussed dollar figures yet. Agencies need to figure that out.



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An important thing to remember is that we are buying increased wolf tolerance.

**Action Item:** This information must be sent out to AMOC by December 1, so the Directors have time to review it prior to the December 17 meeting.

J. SOP Discussion (Continued) (Discussion Leader: Same As Previously)

There was a lot of discussion regarding how to get these to the public for review. AMOC decided we would put them on the AGFD website and provide a password to AMWG members so they could review the documents.

**Action Item:** Comments to synthesizers by October 22. Use track changes.

**Action Item:** Synthesizers will get SOPs to Terry by November 5. Email should be sent with “Mexican wolf SOPs” in the subject line with the appropriate numbers. Use track changes.

**Action Item:** Terry will send these penultimate drafts to AMOC, AMWG cooperator list, and IFT by November 6.

**Action Item:** There will be a conference call on November 18 at 1300 to vote on acceptance of SOPs. There will be one vote per agency that is a signatory to the MOU. AMWG Cooperators can participate in the call, but may not vote.

**Action Item:** Terry will get SOP 1 out this weekend to synthesizers so they will have template to work from.

We will only bring the SOPs that we cannot agree on to the directors for action.

K. Five-year Review (Discussion Leader: Colleen Buchanan)

The five-year review is on schedule. A draft will be out to everyone on December 6.

**Action Item:** Comments on the outline must be to Colleen by November 5.

Final comments are due on March 15. June 17 is the final date for AMOC discussion. There is a stakeholder meeting tomorrow. The draft timeline will be handed out today at AMWG.

The manner in which the AMWG public meetings in January will be held still needs to be worked out. There are lots of ideas (e.g. open microphone, open house). We’d like as many people at these meetings as possible. AMOC and IFT representatives will need to ensure that they wear something that indicates the agency for which they work.

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L. Expectations for AMWG Meeting Tomorrow (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

The IFT discussion and aspen pack issues will probably take more than one hour.

We will not discuss the liability paragraph this afternoon.

USFWS has an answer from Dale finally on the issue regarding written documentation of decisions. This is not a legal issue. Dale will stand behind the protocols. Once they are finished and available, the public will understand the decisions that are made.

M. IFT Budget and Annual Work Plans for 2004 and 2005 (Discussion Leader: Wally Murphy)

USFWS requested more money for FY05. USFS asked for \$50,000. AGFD came up with funds to cover the IFT shortfall for FY04 to do what we needed to do, but we are uncertain if we will have comparable support in FY05.

**TRIBAL INFORMATION REDACTION.**

USFWS also had changes to the summary table, including providing \$40,000 for the shortfall.

The table reflects the Fiscal Year running from October 1 to September 30. AGFD and NMDGF are on different Fiscal Year schedules and that should be acknowledged in the table.

Wildlife Services has not been included in the USFWS tally since 2003. A new column should be added.

The tables do not reflect all costs. Other agencies and counties are not included.

**Action Item:** Wally and Terry will revise the respective tables to reflect new information and changes.

**Action Item:** Terry will distribute the revised table at the Directors meeting in December.

N. Field Office Space (Discussion Leader: Wally Murphy)

USFS will contribute by providing space at no cost. Rent currently is being paid by USFWS. USFS engineers looked at the Alpine and Luna sites. The Luna site is better for building because it is pretty flat and is available. The Alpine site would take more work. The engineers are waiting for a proposal.

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USFWS is investigating purchase of a modular building. Cost information was distributed. The cost is estimated at \$171,00 for purchase or a one-time payment of \$115,000 and \$1,650/month for a lease. This is a lot more money than AMOC expected to spend. The lifespan of a modular building is only about 10 years; snowload considerations would increase the cost. It is difficult to justify that much money for a temporary building.

USFWS would like the agencies that will be using the office space to split the cost. AGFD would like us all to ensure that the available space is being shared appropriately.

After much discussion, IFT was asked to explore all opportunities for office space.

**Action Item:** Dan Groebner, John Oakleaf, and Wally will identify what size building will house future projections of employees. They will get this information to GSA.

**Action Item:** IFT will look for office space.

**Action Item:** WMAT will look into office space in the Hawley Lake area.

**Action Item:** Dan Groebner will look into a bid for a log cabin kit.

O. Role and Function Statements (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

John Oakleaf will send Terry the old version, and Terry will compare it to the new version and send one or both out.

**Action Item:** Send your comment on role and function statements to John Oakleaf by December 1. IFT will incorporate comments. AMOC will revisit this item in early December.

P. Future AMOC and AMWG Meetings (Discussion Leader: Terry Johnson)

Per AMOC discussion in July 2004, the January 2005 AMOC and AMWG meetings will be linked to the Five-Year Review. We will need room large enough to hold 100 or more people, and to allow for informal mingling much like an "Open House." Meetings will be as follows:

AMOC:	January 27, 1330-1700, Glenwood NM (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Alex Thal)
	January 28, 1330-1700, Alpine AZ (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Terry Johnson)
AMWG:	January 26, 1800-2100, Truth or Consequences NM (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Adam Polley)

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January 27, 1800-2100, Glenwood NM (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Alex Thal)

January 28, 1330-1700, Alpine AZ (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Terry Johnson)

January 29, 1800-2100, Phoenix AZ (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Terry Johnson)

The April 2005 AMOC and AMWG meetings will be as follows:

AMOC: April 21, 1000-1700, and April 22, 0800-1200, San Carlos AZ (site = Apache Gold Casino [<http://www.apachegoldcasinoresort.com/>], Hwy 70, 5 mi east of Globe; logistics to be handled by Steve Titla)

AMWG: April 22, 1330-1700, San Carlos AZ (site = Apache Gold Casino; logistics to be handled by Steve Titla)

The June 2005 AMOC and AMWG meetings will be as follows:

AMOC: June 16, 1000-1700, and June 17, 0800-1200, Reserve NM (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Chuck Hayes)

AMWG: June 17, 1330-1700, Reserve NM (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Chuck Hayes)

The October AMOC and AMWG meetings will be as follows:

AMOC: October 13, 1000-1700, and October 14, 0800-1200, Clifton AZ (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Hector Ruedas)

AMWG: October 14, 1330-1700, Morenci AZ (site to be selected and logistics to be handled by Hector Ruedas)

Q. Closure.

**Action Item:** Bring 30 copies of items to be distributed to all future AMOC meetings.

**Action Item:** If you see something in the draft Summary Notes that is inconsistent with your recollection, please comment to Terry. He is not getting feedback from anyone but Colleen.

The meeting adjourned at 1204.